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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LISBON 001289

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SUBJECT: MFA CRAVINHO VISIT TO TIMOR URGES COMMUNICATION

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol/Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon, State.
Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: Portuguese Deputy Foreign Minister Joao Gomes Cravinho and his advisor Diogo Franco traveled to East Timor on a bilateral mission from June 25-28. Franco provided a readout to Emboffs on June 29, stressing that the visit had been positive in spite of the unexpected resignations. Franco voiced Portugal's view that the international community should help East Timor through the crisis together and must rethink its original strategy from 1999. Cravinho met with President Gusmao, former PM Alkatiri, Ramos Horta, Australian Ambassador to Timor Twomey, and UN Representative Ian Martin to press the same message: East Timor leaders need to speak with one voice and the international community should respond with a multilateral force under UN control as soon as possible. End summary.

Bilateral Visit to Urge Communication

¶12. (C) Cravinho's visit had been planned as a way for Portugal to meet with Timorese interlocutors and to discuss the progress of the Portuguese National Republican Guard (GNR) and urge communication between Timorese leaders. Franco noted that other nations in the Australian-led Joint Forces had traveled to East Timor to urge calm and discuss their presence in a similar fashion, but that given Portugal's distance, the initial focus was on getting the GNR forces in place, confirming logistical coordination, and finally making the trip to East Timor. Franco said the timing, which overlapped with the Alkatiri and Ramos Horta resignations, was coincidental. He was careful to note that Portugal does not favor one Timorese faction and was not visiting to either protest or support Alkatiri's resignation. Nevertheless, Cravinho took the opportunity to underscore the importance of communication and cooperation in the wake of the latest crisis.

Portugal Calls for a Unified Timorese Voice

¶13. (C) Cravinho's meetings included talks with President Gusmao, former PM Alkatiri, Fretelin party leaders, and former FM Ramos Horta, in which he pressed for a consensus on the new UN mission. Franco commented that Portugal was frustrated with the Timorese efforts to pit international agencies and forces against one another for partisan ends. "Portugal has no strategic agenda in East Timor, but we do want to see them resolve their internal conflict and consolidate their democracy," according to Franco. He added that the United Nations needed to have a clear message from East Timor about its requirements so that other nations did

not attempt to "take over."

¶4. (C) Cravinho and Franco met with UN Representative Ian Martin. They told Martin that Portugal believes the UN mission would have to be significantly different than the 1999 mission. "The last mission left too soon and did not have enough institutional support." Franco reiterated the same message we have heard from other GOP interlocutors -- Portugal seeks a robust UN mission for the next 2-5 years. Franco mentioned that the UN engagement in East Timor should be rethought to ensure an ultimate success story, but stopped short of offering more detail. (Comment: GOP officials have stressed the robust mission message but have so far shied away from details on their vision for the mission, stressing the need to defer to Timorese preferences.)

Cooperation with Australia Working

¶5. (C) Franco related the highlights of Cravinho's meeting with Australia's Ambassador to East Timor. Franco reported that the meeting had been cordial and that the two countries' troops are working together successfully. Cravinho had intended to travel to Canberra personally to meet Prime Minister Howard but met the Ambassador since Howard is in Europe. Cravinho told Ambassador Twomey that he had heard rumors that Portugal backed Alkatiri and replied that such accusations were "absurd." He said Portugal is not attempting to back Alkatiri any more than Australia was backing Gusmao. Franco said Cravinho had been satisfied with the meeting but considered Australia's plans to depart by December unrealistic since East Timor will clearly require dedicated effort over the long-term.

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Multilateral Force yes, Unilateral Control no

¶6. (C) Franco reported that the visit had reaffirmed Portugal's views regarding the future UN mission: multilateral forces are the only way to go. Without naming countries, Franco said, "most nations have a strategic or economic interest in East Timor that, if left unchecked, could undermine Timor's success." Consequently, he underlined the need for a UN-led multilateral force in East Timor. When asked about Portugal's plans for the police component, he replied that Portugal does not want to lead a force nor deploy a unilateral police mission but stressed it should only be under a UN mandate. He would not be drawn on which country should lead the UN police component. He commented that the multilateral efforts in military, police, and institutional support had worked well and should be repeated. He remarked that a mix of international and bilateral missions would not only be more costly, but also less effective than a single UN-led multilateral force with multiple components. East Timor should be an international success and, therefore, needs UN support immediately, according to Franco.

CPLP Visit Next Week

¶7. (C) Cravinho had excellent access to all political players in Timor, according to Franco. He noted that the Timorese responded to Portuguese representatives very positively given the historic links and what he described as Portugal's even-handed approach. Franco was therefore optimistic that the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP in Portuguese) visit to Timor, slated for July 2, would be well received and allow the Timorese the opportunity to refine their proposals for the international community.

¶8. (C) Comment: Portugal seems convinced that Timor's government should set the tone and makeup of the new UN mission without pressure from the international community.

Franco seemed concerned, however, that the recent resignations and resulting discord would distract Timorese decision-makers from the important task of informing the UN about its needs. He stressed that Portugal wanted to give Timor the opportunity to shape its own future, but acknowledged some frustration over the infighting. End comment.

Hoffman